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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2009

IN TODAY'S PAPERS

New Responsibilities Assigned for The New Cabinet
All papers: Prime Minister Erdogan held his first meeting with new Council of Ministers after the latest cabinet reshuffle. During the meeting, a draft law on the establishment of a Counter Terrorism Under Secretariat under the auspices of Interior Ministry, was submitted for the council's approval. Duties were also announced during the meeting. PM Erdogan will be in charge of the National Security Council, the intelligence service (MIT) and the mass housing Administration TOKI. Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc is responsible for ties with the Council of State, the general directorate for foundations, the general directorate for press and information, TRT broadcaster, Anatolian news agency, and the radio and television board RTUK. Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Cicek is responsible for ties with parliament, Cyprus coordination, public administration reforms, human rights coordination and for the High Inspection Board. Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan is responsible for the coordination of economic issues, the Treasury, the central bank, Ziraat bank, Halk Bank, Exim bank, Vakiflar bank, capital markets board SPK, banking watchdog BDDK, state banking fund TMSF, and the tobacco and spirits regulatory fund. State Minister Mehmet Aydin is in charge of the Alliance of Civilizations, the Ataturk Culture Language and History Institution, the science board TUBITAK. State Minister Hayati Yazici is in charge of the Istanbul 2010 European Culture Capital Agency, the coordination of collective public contracts, the Customs Under secretariat, the State Personnel Department, the Social Solidarity Fund, and the Promotion Fund. State Minister Faruk Nafiz Ozak is in charge of the Youth and Sports Directorate, the directorate for university dormitories, and the Soccer federation. State Minister Zafer Caglayan is responsible for foreign trade. State Minister Faruk Celik is in charge of the Directorate for Religious affairs and the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency. State Minister Egemen Bagis is the Chief EU negotiator in charge of the General Secretariat for EU Affairs. State Minister Selma Aliye Kavaf is in charge of family and social research, the status of women and children, and orphanages. State Minister Cevdet Yilmaz is responsible for the Eastern Anatolian Project (DAP), the Konya Plain Project, the State Planning Organization, the Turkish Statistics Institution, and the

Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP).

Comments on the New Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu

Sahin Alpay wrote in Islamist oriented Zaman: "Davutoglu has been a significant figure in shaping the mostly successful foreign policy of the ruling AKP. Thus, Davutoglu is the perfect choice for this post."

Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "It was a noteworthy comment when the new foreign minister described relations with the West as 'one of the fundamental legs of Turkey's foreign policy vision.' This comment, in a way, addresses concerns that Davutoglu's main focus will be the Middle East and the Arab world."

Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "Davutoglu's multi-faceted foreign policy approach generally receives appreciation, however given the current situation his approach may be spiraling out of control. So far, Turkey's focus on Hizbullah and Hamas has not produced anything positive at all. Mediation efforts regarding Iran and Syria have not been successful either. It is good for foreign policy to have many facets, but there should be an overall focused goal as well. In Turkey's case, this must be EU accession."

Bloody Attack on Village Wedding in Mardin

All papers and TV channels report that the wedding reception of the daughter of Bilge village's former head turned into a battle ground due to a feud between two families. Four masked gunmen waged an attack with grenades and automatic weapons on the wedding party,

ANKARA 00000650 002 OF 003

killing 44 people and injuring 17 others.

Prime Minister Erdogan to Visit Baku and Sochi

Mainstream Sabah and Islamist-oriented Zaman report that Prime Minister Erdogan is going to Baku on May 13 to hold meetings with Azerbaijani President Aliyev and to Sochi on May 16 to meet with Russian President Putin.

In a related story, mainstream Hurriyet reports that President Gul will go to Prague May 7-8 for a trilateral summit with Azerbaijani President Aliyev and Armenian President Sargsian.

Talabani: "No Bargaining over Kirkuk"

Mainstream Sabah reports that Iraqi President Jalal Talabani talked to press in Suleymaniye following his meeting with Iraqi KRG President Massoud Barzani. Talabani stressed his objection to the UN proposal to postpone the referendum in Kirkuk for five years and said "Article 140 regarding the referendum in Kirkuk is a legal and constitutional article. I will never agree to give up Kirkuk in return for something else. There will be no bargaining over Kirkuk."

PKK's Karayilan Talks to Milliyet

Mainstream Milliyet features a front page interview with PKK leader Murat Karayilan. Columnist Hasan Cemal conducted the interview in "one of the villages near the Qandil mountains in northern Iraq." Karayilan made encouraging comments about peace by saying "We have strong hopes for peace. The 1993 ceasefire was a good chance but did not go further due to lack of political will. This time we have another important chance and this chance has to be used. We want to see an end to bloodshed. If we can start a dialogue, we can then talk about disarmament. (Abdullah) Ocalan is the address for dialogue. If that is not acceptable then we should be the ones consulted. And even if that is also unacceptable, those chosen by the political will of the people [i.e. the largely pro-Kurdish opposition party DTP] should be the venue for dialogue."

Could the Taliban Get Their Hands On Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons?
(CNN Turk)

Media note Washington is increasingly concerned about the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons as the Pakistani military engages in intense fighting with the Taliban. Liberal Radikal reports in "Pakistan, The U.S.' Nuclear Nightmare," that "The Obama Administration's concerns are increasing over whether Pakistan's

nuclear weapons could fall into the wrong hands," as, "Pakistan was pressured by the U.S. to fight the Taliban, and thousands of civilians are now fleeing the area." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet headlines, "The U.S. Is Worried About Pakistan," as, "The Taliban Could Capture (Pakistan's) Nuclear Weapons." Mainstream Haberturk reports in "Where are Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons?" that "The U.S. has given Pakistan \$100 million in order to secure the weapons," but, "Washington is nervous that as the Taliban gains power, the weapons could wind up in the wrong hands." CNN Turk reports "As the Taliban spreads its influence, the U.S. becomes more and more worried about the safety of Pakistan's nuclear weapons."

In a related story, mainstream Sabah carries the sensational headline, "Dogs Are Eating Dead Civilians On the Side of the Road," and the paper reports, "With every passing day, violence escalates in Pakistan's northwest regions and the threat to civilian life continues," as "150,000 civilians, mostly women and children, have scattered throughout the country in order to flee the fighting" between the Taliban and the Pakistani military.

Gates Embarks on Mid East Tour to Calm Fears Regarding U.S.-Iran Dialogue.

Media note Defense Secretary Robert Gates has embarked on a tour of the Middle East in order to assure U.S. allies that talks with Iran will not harm the U.S.' relations with its current allies in the Mid East. Leftist Taraf headlines "Iran Is Still Showing Its Fist," and

ANKARA 00000650 003 OF 003

notes Secretary Gates "gave a guarantee to U.S. allies that U.S.-Iran talks will not damage U.S. relations with other Gulf states." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet headlines, "Gates Emphasized that Washington's Rapprochement with Iran Will Not Damage Relations With Washington's Allies" and "The U.S. Will Not Upset Riyadh" or other Gulf states. In "An Iran Guarantee from Gates," mainstream Haberturk reports, "Gates gave a guarantee that the improvement in relations between the U.S. and Iran will not do damage to U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia." Islamist-oriented Zaman reports, "Gates Will Calm Arab Fears Over The U.S.-Iran Dialogue."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- Jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan underwent minor surgery in Imrali.
- DTP officials ended their hunger strike and realed a press statement.
- The EU Commission said the Turkish economy is expected to shrink by 3.7 percent in 2009.

World

- The World Health Organization cautions that the swine flu outbreak could gain momentum in the months ahead.
- Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Azer Azimov, who is in charge of the Nagorno Karabakh issue, came to Turkey to meet Turkey's new Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu

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